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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the effectiveness of a program for improving motivation to learn among third grade/Chapter 1 reading students in a growing rural community located in northern Illinois. The problem of low motivation was documented by systematic classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student surveys. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students had little or no ownership in their learning, demonstrated little confidence and low self-esteem, and exhibited a lack of transfer. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of four major categories of intervention: implementation of cooperative learning strategies, development of a portfolio assessment plan, application of organizational tools, and institution of goal-setting techniques. The four-part intervention provided a positive influence on the students' academic motivation; improvement in the quantity and quality of goals set and accomplished; positive parental feedback regarding portfolio assessment; and cohesive classroom atmosphere created by cooperative learning skills. (Contains 15 references, and 2 tables and 7 figures of data. Appendixes present numerous survey instruments, data, samples of completed teacher and student selection forms, and parent responses.) (Author/RS)

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ED 386 692

IMPROVING ACADEMIC MOTIVATION

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master's of Arts in
Teaching and Leadership

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St. Xavier University - IRI
Field-Based Master's Program

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Action Research Project
Site: Rockford, IL
Date: May 1995

*Teachers
Pecatonica
Elementary
School

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This Action Research was approved by

Priscilla Hartwig Ed.D., **SXU Facilitator**

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Dean, School of Education

Dedicated to:

our loving families
in appreciation for their support, understanding, and
encouragement during the absences and long hours
that made this project possible;

the third grade class
and their parents
in gratitude for their cooperation, encouragement
and willingness to try new things;

the "wing"
because they are what they are.

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Abstract

AUTHOR: Anders/Wiemer SITE: Rockford III
DATE: May 1995

TITLE: Improving Academic Motivation

ABSTRACT: This report describes a program for improving motivation to learn among third grade/Chapter I Reading students in a growing rural community, located in Northern Illinois. The problem of low motivation was documented by systematic classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student surveys.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students had little or no ownership in their learning, demonstrated little confidence and low self-esteem, and exhibited a lack of transfer.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of four major categories of intervention: implementation of cooperative learning strategies, development of a portfolio assessment plan, application of organizational tools, and institution of goal setting techniques.

The four-part intervention provided a positive influence on the students' academic motivation; improvement in the quantity and quality of goals set and accomplished; positive parental feedback regarding portfolio assessment; and cohesive classroom atmosphere created by cooperative learning skills.

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The students in the targeted grade three and Chapter I reading class at an elementary school are exhibiting low motivation as evidenced by systematic observations, teacher interviews, and student surveys.

Immediate Problem Setting

The targeted elementary school educates 505 pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students and serves as the only grade school in the district. The district also includes a high school enrollment of 211 students, totaling 716 district wide. The ethnicity of the grade school totals 100 per cent Caucasian. Students designated as low income comprise 6.1 per cent of the population. The grade school has a 96.9 per cent attendance rate, 8.1 per cent student mobility rate, and a 0.4 per cent chronic truancy rate, with only two students designated as chronic truants in the school report card (Community School District 321, 1993).

The elementary school was built in three stages during the 1930's, 1960's and 1970's. A centrally air

conditioned portion on the second floor, built in the 1970's, houses the principal's office, library, computer lab, and grades six through eight. Pre-kindergarten through first grade, and the cafeteria are situated on the floor below. Grades two through five are located in a two-story wing, without air conditioning, built in the 1960's. The gymnasium, science room, music, and two special education rooms can be found in the original 1930's brick building.

The elementary school consists of 29 adequately equipped classrooms. The school contains an IBM computer lab, with 22 computers and one trained computer aide. This facility is used by each elementary class 45 minutes per week. The library/learning center adjoins the computer lab and is managed by a library aide. Certified staff conduct physical education classes in the 1930's gymnasium. Certified music and art personnel instruct in their own classrooms.

The elementary school offers a full-service hot lunch program with 6.1 per cent of the students on the free or reduced priced lunch program. Four classrooms accommodate children with special needs. The building presently operates at full capacity. Handicap accessibility for the building reached realization in fall of 1994. School grounds include an asphalt play area, as well as a

community constructed wooden playground designed by students and a nationally known playground architect.

The administration of the targeted district consists of one pre-kindergarten through eighth grade first year principal and one high school principal. Both administrators were appointed to their positions in July, 1994. The current superintendent began serving the district in the fall of 1993. Four secretaries, two counselors, a medical records clerk, and four custodians currently serve the two building district. The staff includes 47 certified teachers, of whom 60.8 per cent have their bachelor's degree and 39.2 per cent have attained a master's degree or above. The staff consists of 32 females and 15 males, and is 100 per cent Caucasian. The average pupil-teacher ratio is 19:1, and every grade level has at least two sections. Some educators service students in both buildings.

The availability of several types of support staff is a result of membership in a multi-district cooperative. Several school districts share a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist, a social worker, and an educational psychologist. Classroom aides assist pre-kindergarten and kindergarten staff, as well as the district's one physically handicapped student.

Located in rural northern Illinois, the district

extends into portions of two counties. The district provides a significant amount of bus transportation due to the district's sprawling boundaries.

The targeted school's Board of Education consists of seven elected community representatives from designated areas within the district. Local community members established a not-for-profit foundation in 1993 to secure funds for educational purposes. An eight member task force of teachers leads the development of the state mandated School Improvement Plan. A Community School Improvement Team, organized to secure public support and foster communication, also acts as a liaison between the community and district toward this effort. An active Parent Teacher Organization supports the district and encourages home-school cooperation. Ninety-six per cent of families of students established at least one contact with teachers during the past year. After a previously failed attempt, voters of the targeted district narrowly passed a vitally necessary referendum supporting school funding in November, 1993.

Teaching of the academic curriculum occurs in heterogeneous settings at the primary level. The core curriculum subjects of reading, math, writing, and language, initiated in kindergarten, are developed extensively in

later grades. A more concentrated exposure to social studies and science begins at the third grade level. Ability grouping at the fourth and fifth grade level for math and reading, based on students' scores on standardized achievement tests and other various assessments, determines class designations. Departmentalization occurs for all subjects at this level. Students with special needs receive resource programs at all grade levels, provided the parents have given their consent. Students participate daily in physical education, twice a week in music, and at least once a week in art. The library aide provides special library time on a weekly basis.

Supplements to the basic curriculum include: Invent America, Young Authors, County Wide Spelling Bee, the district's Aspiring Writers, Art Club, Academic Bowl, and Sports. Additionally, the district Education Celebration, Book Day, World's Largest Concert, and assorted field trips round out supplemental experiences available annually.

Description of Surrounding Community

The surrounding rural community, located 17 miles west of a large metropolitan area and 15 miles east of a moderately sized city, has a population of 1700 residents. Located on the banks of a river, the community provides ample opportunity for recreation. Eighteen miles of prairie

paths and forest preserves offer the public and school children an opportunity to view nature. The community annually hosts the county fair in August, and brings in money and visitors from miles around to see the shows, the 4-H and open class judged projects and livestock, and to enjoy the rides.

Civic organizations abound in the small town. Those offered to students include: Boy Scouts, Future Farmers of America, Ambulance Cadets, Girl Scouts, 4-H, Church Youth Organizations, Tumbling, Dance, Music Activities, Summer Recreation, and Library Reading Program. Junior Women's Club provides an opportunity for civic-minded women to support the community through various fund raisers. The Organization for Family and Community Educational Services coordinates programs among three townships. Rotary, Masons, Lions, and Veterans of Foreign Wars provide opportunities for the men to become active community members. Friends of the Library, an Improvement Association, Historical Society, and Meet and Eat offer services and membership to all.

The town's main businesses include Ipsen Ceramics, a manufacturer of high technology ceramics, and Dean Foods, an international producer of dairy products. No public transportation system exists in the community. The majority of the white/blue collar labor force commutes to one of the larger cities for its employment. The town's

work force is comprised of 45 percent white collar and 35 percent blue collar workers. Household income averages under $15,000 for 15 percent, $15,000 to $49,999 for 54 percent, and $50,000 and above for 31 percent of the population. Eighty-one percent of the adult population has attained a high school or higher education (Sweeny, 1994).

The community supports six churches of varying denominations, one grocery, three gas stations, and many taverns and restaurants. The recent addition of a part-time doctor and clinic, after years of searching, has become an asset to the community. The community's volunteer fire and ambulance staff provide a valuable service to the community. Proximity of an Illinois State Police Headquarters, together with a village police force, offers the comfort of added protective services. The targeted elementary school cooperates with police programs by offering the building as a training site for the canine patrol.

Housing in the village varies from the restored Victorian houses to government subsidized rental units for low income families and the elderly. A small mobile home park is surrounded by the open spaces of the farm community. Generations have remained within a small radius of the community. Consequently, third and fourth generation children presently attend the same school as older family members once did.

Like many surrounding rural areas, the village has had an influx of new residents resulting from the phenomena of "urban flight". Presently, the village covers less than two square miles. Recent subdivisions have added to this area. Growth potential includes a planned lake development which would add approximately 500 homes to the community. Developers have submitted proposals for additional subdivisions and await zoning authorization.

Regional and National Context of Problem

Whether reading in professional journals or conversing with colleagues, one frequently encounters the topic of low student motivation. The characteristics in varying forms include: poor basic skills, lack of attention, and poor thinking and problem solving skills. In considering possible causes, critics blame the breakdown of society's values, depressed educational funding, and poor teaching methods, among other factors. International comparisons leave the American system appearing to be inadequate.

> Millions of children who are very capable of learning - children with average, above average, and even gifted abilities, including those from middle class homes where education is supposed to be valued - are simply not performing up to their capabilities. Underachievers sit in every

> classroom and live in many families. They waste educational resources, try the patience of even the best teachers, manipulate their families toward chaos and destroy their own confidence and sense of control (Rimm, 1988, p. 1).

Lack of achievement in American schools has served as the catalyst for implementation of dramatic measures of change. Some of the changes appear methodical, as in the legislated mandates of the State of Illinois toward the School Improvement Plans. Others seem catastrophic, such as the measures being federally legislated to rejuvenate San Francisco's three lowest achieving schools. This restructuring plan entails replacing entire staffs - from principals to teachers to support staff - in an effort to start over from scratch. Some supporters view this desperate action as a tool, "To improve the educational lot of the hardest-to-reach students," as noted in a recent press release (Rockford Register Star, March 6, 1994, p.6A).

Miller (1993) cited a recent UCLA study in which 80 percent of college faculty felt that high school academic preparation was as poor as, or worse than, it had been in the 1970's, when a need for reform was clearly evident. University of California in Los Angeles Cooperative Institutional Research Program reported findings that

students entering college today are far less likely to exhibit independent study habits than those who entered 25 years ago. Only ten percent of the current students read beyond the requirements or study regularly in the library, and 73 percent rarely or never check out books or journals. American students rarely initiate learning, but merely do what they are required to do (Miller, 1993).

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

The problem of low academic motivation was documented through student-interest surveys (Appendix A), interviews of the previous year's teachers (Appendices B, C), observation of the quantity of incomplete work, and checklists of participation in optional academic activities, over a four week period of time (Appendix D). Students completed the survey between August 29 and September 2, 1994, with parental assistance. Of the 22 distributed surveys in the targeted third and Chapter I Reading classrooms, 16 were returned; the equivalent of 73 percent of the distributed surveys. The collated data may be found in Appendix E.

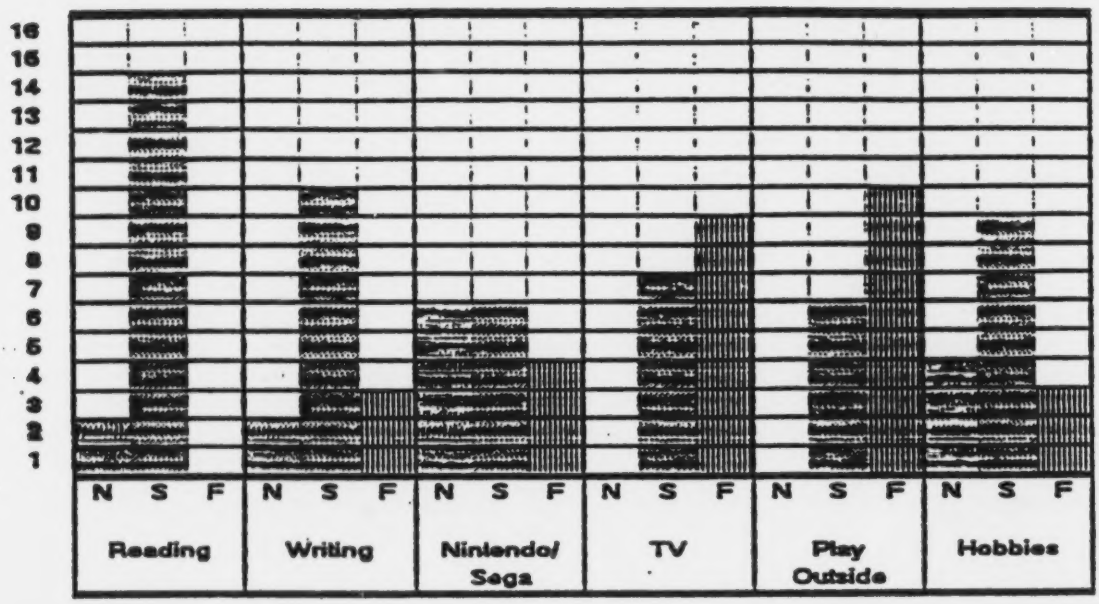
The question most relevant to student motivation, on the student interest survey, is number 5, "How do you feel about extra credit work?" Eighty-one percent of the respondents indicate a favorable perception of extra credit work. Conversely, when given the opportunity to participate in optional extra activities, only 129 responses were received out of a possible 330 opportunities totalling a 39 percent response rate. The conclusion may be drawn that one

factor influencing student non-participation, in an activity perceived as favorable, could be low motivation.

The teacher interviews indicated an average of 60 percent of the class as motivated learners. Only 23 percent experienced difficulty in completing work. Curriculum work consumed most of the school day leaving little time available for free choice activities. Current teacher observation of incomplete work indicated that 52 percent of the targeted students turned in late work during the four week observation period. Twenty-four percent of the targeted students displayed tendencies toward habitual late work. Analysis of these data suggested approximately 52 percent of the targeted students displayed lack of academic responsibility that may be attributed to low motivation. Twenty-three percent of the targeted group displayed this tendency in the previous year.

Probable Cause

When considering the probable causes for low academic motivation, several factors can be examined. These consist of leisure activities, home chores or responsibilities, involvement in organized activities after school, and amount of time delegated to academic work at home. The targeted student responses to these survey questions are represented in the following graphs and table.



N= Never
S= Sometimes
F= Frequently

Figure 1

Number of Students Responding to Choices of Spare Time Activities Class of 1994

Responses indicated that participation in television viewing and outside play was preferred over reading and writing, as spare time choices. Nine percent indicated never choosing to read, and nine percent never choosing to write as spare time activities. Zero percent chose to read

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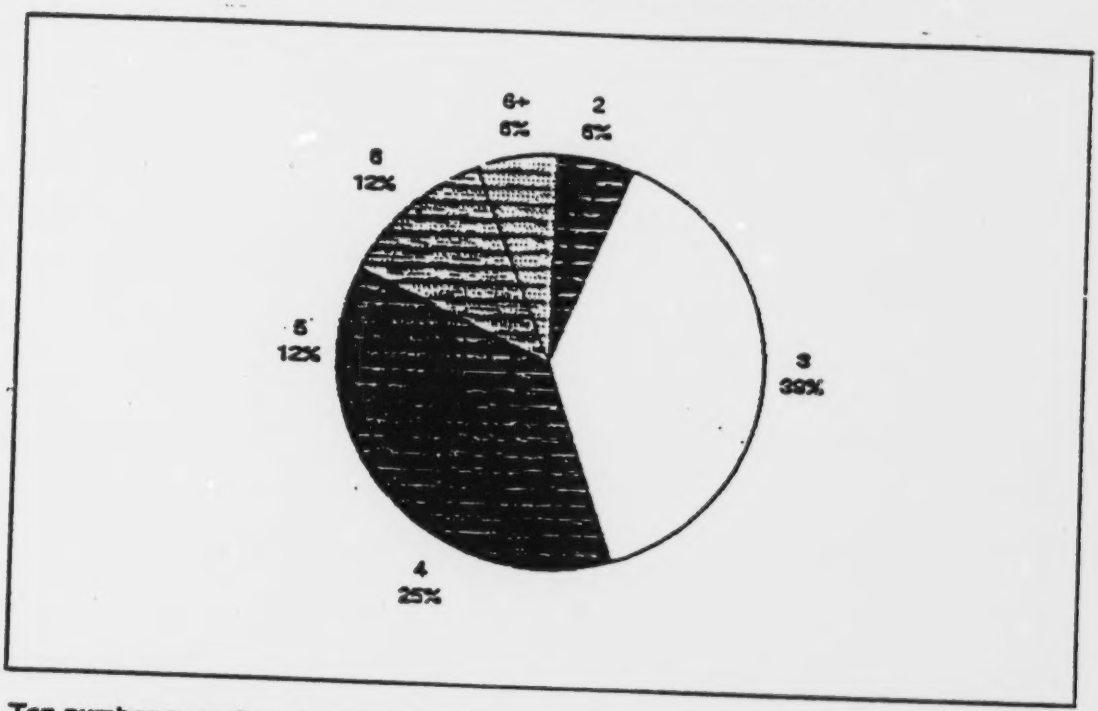
a lot and 14 percent chose to write a lot. In contrast, 100 percent either sometimes or frequently chose to watch television or play outside. Motivation to use spare time to pursue activities related to academics was low.



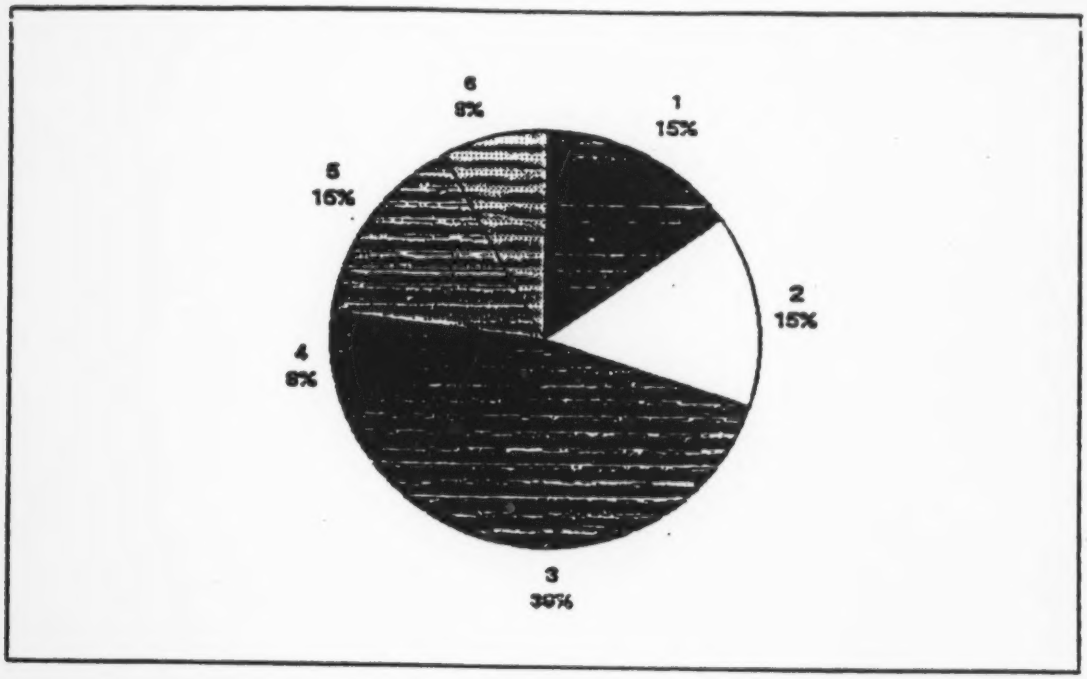
Top number = number of responsibilities
Percentage = students

Figure 2

Percentage of Students Selecting a Predetermined Number of Responsibilities at Home Class of 1994

Chores and responsibilities within the home varied from a minimum of two chores to a maximum of over six chores. A majority of students were responsible for three or four

chores at home. The amount of time involved in these chores could have ranged from a few minutes of full attention, such as making beds, to a few hours of partial attention, such as babysitting for siblings.



Top number = number of organized activities
Percentage = students

Figure 3

Percentage of Students Selecting a Predetermined Number of Organized Activities Class of 1994

The activities surveyed ranged from seasonal sports, weekly lessons or meetings, to monthly or intermittently scheduled events. Seventy percent of the students participated in three or more activities.

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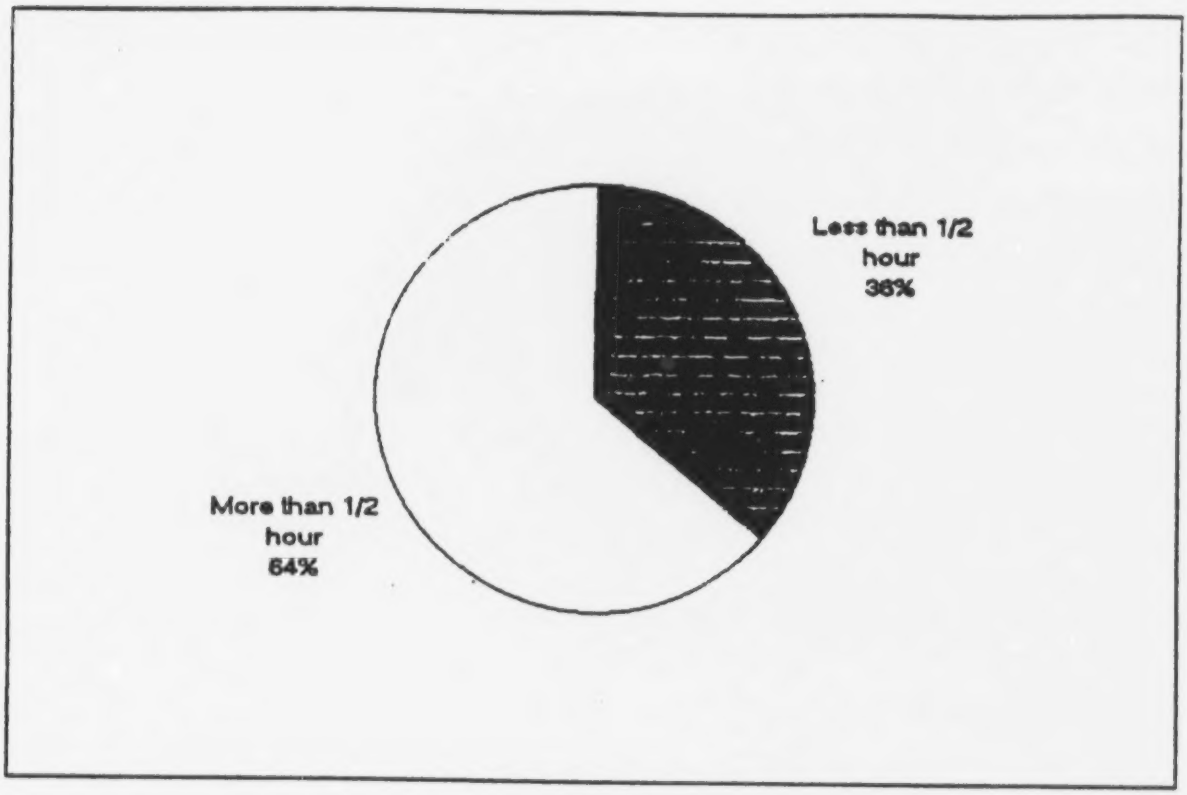

Figure 4

Percentage of Students Responding to Amount of Time Spent on Homework Class of 1984

The amount of time spent on homework, as indicated on the survey, showed 64 percent of the students spending 30 minutes to one hour on homework daily. No students indicated a time greater than one hour.

Several possible causes for the lack of student motivation in the classroom have been suggested by the professional literature. One of the probable causes

affecting student motivation results from a lack of parental encouragement. According to Stiles (1992), in contrast to other industrialized countries, American children show apathy and low academic achievement as a result of the lack of parental nurturing, caring, and trust. Berliner and Cassenova (1993) also stress the importance and need for a strong support network of family, friends, and neighbors to serve as role models to provide the strength and stability needed for responsible educational growth. "The parents of low achieving students often were described by researchers as 'uncommitted' and lacking in motivation and skills to help their children in schoolwork" (Berliner and Cassenova, 1993, p. 136). The current family support system has failed to provide today's youth with the motivating factors needed for success in academic pursuits. Where the parental support exists, priorities are often educationally misdirected.

The educational setting also contributes to the problem of students' low motivation. Traditional schools encourage competition entrenched in a value system based on grades and individual achievement, which may perpetuate the self-defeatist attitude in low achieving students. According to Chickering and Garrison (1987), "Good learning like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated" (Eble, 1988, p. 53). Glasser's student interviews

(1990) revealed disparities between the academic and extra-curricular realms. He found that students felt more self-importance in their extracurricular activities because of the acceptance and encouragement of cooperative efforts and opportunities for social interaction. In academic classes, however, a spirit of isolation and self-sufficiency was expected. A non-cooperative structure within the classroom, therefore, becomes another component of the low motivated student.

A low motivated student's lack of ownership in his learning results in a lack of responsibility for that learning. Children need to be given the opportunity to help determine their own educational goals (Pierce, 1993). Currently, schools neglect to teach realistic goal setting techniques necessary for academic and personal success. "Far too many students are refusing to work hard for what seems to be a too-distant payoff" (Glasser, 1990, p. 46). When students establish unrealistic goals, either too high or too low, they set themselves up for failure or stagnation, which may lead to an image of low self-esteem.

The probable causes for the problem of low academic motivation gathered from the site and the literature are in agreement. The survey results suggest that the average targeted student is not overburdened by nonacademic

obligations to the extent that these obligations would hinder the timely completion of work or participation in the available optional academic activities. The literature also suggests that low academic motivation may be due to insufficient parental support of academics, deficiencies in organizational skills, inability to establish and meet attainable goals, lack of cooperative learning experiences, and low self-esteem.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGIES

The Review of the Literature

The literature suggests extrinsic factors influence a student's academic motivation. Extrinsic motivators may range from a sticker or a happy face on a paper to receiving money for good grades on a report card. Other examples of external motivators include verbal praise, written notes, certificates, trophies, and other more elaborate recognition systems. In the short term, extrinsic motivators stimulate many students to perform. However, this type of reward system does not create lasting change (Kohn, 1993). Additionally, overuse of extrinsic motivators may prove detrimental to the development of intrinsic motivation, because the learners depend on the reward as the motivation rather than looking within themselves for reward.

Intrinsic rewards also affect student academic motivation. In contrast to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation eludes concrete definition. An intrinsically motivated learner exhibits enduring traits of self-satisfaction, self-determination, and self-recognition. The

accomplishment of learning to ride a bike or tying a shoe for the first time demonstrates the development of an intrinsic reward and a "look what I can do now!" attitude. A problem-solving technique has been successfully applied and a celebration of self results.

When considering these two alternatives, extrinsic or intrinsic, the inclusion of intrinsic motivators within the identified classroom setting seems to be the most appropriate and beneficial. The development and cultivation of a student's intrinsic satisfaction and appreciation of achievements helps to create a "life-long learner": the educators' ultimate goal for all students. According to Kohn (1993) extrinsic motivators do not change attitudes that affect behaviors. When working for an extrinsic motivator, a learner does not feel any commitment to what is learned. These motivators only change what a learner does for a short period of time. If a student's environment is free of extrinsic motivators, the learner's interest in a task will remain, even when unforeseen problems occur.

The literature indicates four areas to be considered to develop more intrinsically motivated learners. Low motivated learners lack parental support, suffer low self-esteem, see no purpose to their learning, and have no control over what is learned. These four prominent concerns require primary examination.

In a traditionally competitive classroom, students may feel alone and lack needed support. In contrast, a cooperative classroom emphasizes a group effort and less emphasis on the individual. Every learner can feel successful in a cooperative atmosphere. Eble (1988) citing Wlodkowski, suggests that in order to motivate students, a teacher needs to create classroom activities that help build on a learner's abilities. In a cooperative atmosphere, these problems are addressed.

Another consideration, when addressing low academic motivation, involves alternative assessments of the student's learning growth and academic accomplishments. All students need to be involved and have ownership in their learning growth. In order to fulfill this need, the learners must comprehend why learning has importance to them (Tripp, 1993). The main characteristic of portfolio assessment is the creation of a self-evaluation element. A positive evaluation by the student will affect the learner's self-esteem positively. In portfolio assessment, students choose their best work, reflect on that work using prior established criteria, and later share the portfolio with significant others. The learner gains control over what to include, and what improvements need to be made, by reflecting on each piece of work before including it in the portfolio. This process reinforces learning and gives the work value. Portfolio assessment encourages the development

of goal-setting. Once assessment is made, the student now sets new learning goals (Donaldson, 1994).

Goal-setting empowers the learner by establishing a point of focus. When learners have a focus, a goal, their learning becomes interesting, and a desire to learn becomes important (Rooney, Lipuma, 1994). The development of realistic goal-setting requires not only instruction, but modeling. Students must recognize that many goals are achieved in steps, and the achievement process may require adjustments. Wlodkowski and Jaynes (1990) emphasize the importance of goal-setting to a student's self-determination, and suggest that this strategy increases a student's confidence and capability to succeed.

Connected to portfolio assessment and goal-setting, are organizational skills. "The organization of information for study, (is) such a critical skill that achievers and underachievers alike should get practice" (Rimm, 1986, p. 228). Organization of time, as well as materials, fosters greater success and achievements. Like the goal-setting process, organizational strategies require instruction and modeling. Students may not have had prior exposure to the type of organizational skills necessary for academic success.

Parental involvement is another important component of student motivation. To affect a change in a student's motivation to learn, parents must be involved with their

child's school and teacher. A partnership needs to be established. Wlodkowski and Jaynes (1990) state that parents make the greatest difference in a child's motivation to learn. The parent/teacher collaboration enhances that power. According to Stiles (1992), "Parents must encourage their children, show an interest in their work, and instill a sense of responsibility" (p. 63).

Terminal Objective

> As a result of implementing a change in instructional strategies during the period from September, 1994, to January, 1995, the third grade/Chapter I reading students in the targeted class will increase their academic motivation as measured by systematic class observations, anecdotal records, charts, and surveys.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following four-part plan will be introduced:

> (1) A portfolio assessment plan to empower students to self-evaluate, recognize their strengths, and identify areas requiring more development.
>
> (2) Goal-setting and evaluating techniques to increase students' engagement in the learning process.
>
> (3) An organizational tool to develop life-long organizational skills which lead to academic success.
>
> (4) Weekly cooperative learning lessons incorporated into various academic subjects.

Description of Problem Resolution Strategy

The action plan is designed to address four solution components: portfolio assessment for self-evaluation and ownership of academic responsibilities, use of an organizational tool to record assignments, development of goal setting and evaluating techniques, and implementation of cooperative teaching strategies within the classroom.

In August, 1994, prior to implementation of the program, the organizational tool was designed and assembled. A demonstration of the tool was offered to parents at the annual Back-to-School Night Program. Cover letters further explaining this strategy were also sent home with students.

The four-phase implementation plan is outlined below. The time frame incorporates the overlapping of several of the components.

Phase I. Portfolio Assessment

A. Who: The classroom teacher will organize a system of portfolio assessment with both teacher and student selections to be reviewed with the parents at conferences.

B. What: A means of authentic assessment will be developed in which students can evaluate progress and demonstrate goal attainment and growth to significant others.

C. Collection of material to be included in portfolios will begin in August during the first week of classes, in selected subjects.

D. How:
1. Design portfolios, both working and showcase.
2. Develop a management system for portfolios.
3. Collect work samples.
4. Model reflection techniques and guide student selection process.
5. Select teacher samples.
6. Confer - Teacher/Student (3 times).
7. Confer - Teacher/Student/Parent (1 time required, more optional).
8. Celebrate/ Send home evaluations for portfolios.
9. Evaluate formally -
   a. After Nov. Conferences.
   b. After Jan. Teacher/Student conferences.

E. Why: To empower students to self-evaluate and recognize their learning strengths and identify areas requiring more development. To further involve parents in their child's academic careers.

F. Where: Portfolio assessment will be developed within the target classrooms.

Phase II. Use of Organizational Tools

A. Who: The classroom teacher will create these tools to be used by the students and supported by parent review.

B. What: Assignment notebooks will be created that are organized for daily/weekly/monthly/yearly development and review.

C. When: These notebooks will be implemented in Mid-September 1994.

D. How:
1. Cover letter explaining the purpose and function of the notebook will be sent to parents.
2. Provide assignment notebooks.
3. Model proper method for recording assignments.
4. Guided practice for recording assignments.
5. Monitor progress through daily/weekly teacher/parent checks according to need.
6. Daily/weekly parental comments and/or signatures.

E. Why: To develop lifelong organizational skills which lead to academic success.

F. Where: Organizational tools will be developed within the targeted classrooms.

Phase III. Goal-Setting

A. Who: Students will develop goals with teacher assistance and parent support.

B. What: The student will write weekly goals, establish plans to meet those goals, assess what they accomplished, and reflect on accomplishments.

C. When: Mid-September.

D. How:
1. The student will use a weekly goal setting plan sheet.
2. The teacher will model setting a short term or daily goal.
3. Goal setting for the day.
4. Evaluation of daily goal. (Alone/ Partner/Class).
5. Celebrate success or readjust.
6. Model how to celebrate the success or readjust the near miss.
7. Progress to longer term goals.
8. Continue modeling and evaluating.

E. Why: Goal-setting makes students more responsible for their own learning, increases engagement in the learning process, and structures success.

F. Where: Goal-setting will be recorded within portfolios and assignment notebooks within the targeted classrooms.

Phase IV. Cooperative Learning Strategies

A. Who: Classroom teachers with the targeted students.

B. What: Develop lesson plans that include cooperative group work.

C. When: Late September.

D. How: 1. Introduce cooperative group dynamics.
2. Model behaviors acceptable in cooperative groups.
3. Bonding activities.
4. Weekly cooperative lessons built into various subject areas.

E. Why: To create a less isolated learning atmosphere. To strengthen different learning styles. To promote positive social interaction with peers to build self-esteem.

F. Where: Cooperative lessons will be developed within the targeted classrooms.

Methods of Assessment

The effects of the intervention will be assessed using several methods of data collection. Numbers of

participants in Brain Buster Activities, Extra Credit, and Challenges will be documented monthly on charts. Additionally, monthly totals of incomplete assignments will be charted. Evaluation surveys will be distributed upon completion of parent/student/teacher portfolio conferences. Charts will also be formulated regarding the number of weekly goals completed, adjusted, or discarded. Systematic class observations and anecdotal records will measure positive interactions within cooperative learning groups.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve academic motivation. The intervention consisted of four parts: portfolio assessment, assignment notebooks, goal-setting, and cooperative learning strategies.

In September, students were provided with a two-sided double pocket portfolio. This portfolio was assembled by joining two folders with heavy tape. Students designed their own name plates for the front cover to promote ownership and easy identification of the portfolios. One side was designated for teacher-selected artifacts, while the other was reserved for work chosen by the student. A representation of the portfolio may be found in Appendix F.

Selection techniques were modeled and practiced. Teachers encouraged the selection of work that depicted a range of understandings, from a skill's introduction through its mastery. Some examples were selected to illustrate misunderstandings which were later addressed or corrected, showing student growth. Others represented a special

effort put forth by the student. Teacher selections were accumulated using similar criteria.

Reflection sheets were attached to both teacher and student artifacts as they were selected. The reflection sheets identified the artifact and briefly explained the reason for its inclusion in the portfolio, as illustrated in Appendices G, H, and I. Work was accumulated over the course of the intervention. Students occasionally discarded artifacts no longer considered significant. The students were not allowed to amend the teacher's side of the portfolio.

In November, portfolios were reviewed and discussed with peers in preparation for a portfolio conference with parent, teacher, and student. Students self-evaluated their progress prior to the conference. The form they used, "A Rating Scale for Learners" may be found in Appendix J.

Parents received an invitation to bring students to the scheduled conference times. (Appendix K) As previously practiced, the students presented their portfolios to both teacher and parents. The teacher's side was then presented to the parents and student. The remainder of the time was for parental questions and concerns. Provisions for home conferences between parent and child were made to accommodate those unable to attend. Parents completed an evaluation response form at the conclusion of the portfolio conference. (Appendix L)

An additional conference with the teacher took place in February. The portfolios and a cover letter were sent home with the third quarter report cards for parental review. A copy of the cover letter may be found in Appendix M.

Deviations from the original plan included: combining the working and showcase portfolios into one portfolio to streamline the management system, reducing the number of student/teacher conferences from three to two due to time constraints and curriculum demands, and postponing teacher/student conferences from January to February to coincide with the end of the third grading period.

An assignment notebook was designed by the teachers to provide for the organization of assignments and for the goal-setting component of the intervention. Sample pages of the assignment notebook may be found in Appendix N. The notebooks were distributed to the students in mid-September. A cover letter introduced the notebook and explained its purpose and function (Appendix O). Parents attending the August Open House received a preliminary explanation of the assignment notebook from the teachers. Proper techniques for recording assignments were modeled and guided practice was provided by the teachers. Teachers, in collaboration with parents, monitored the progress and communicated concerns with one another as necessary.

In October students were instructed in goal-setting strategies. The teachers modeled and gave examples of short term goals. Time for the individual establishment of weekly goals was scheduled on Mondays. Each Friday, students reflected on successes, or re-adjusted and changed goals for the following week. Original plans called for longer term goals, but as the intervention progressed, it became apparent that students would require an extended length of time to work with short term goals. Teachers modeled the long term process, but made no requirement of the students to set long term goals.

The final component of the intervention consisted of cooperative group work. The model was demonstrated by teachers interacting cooperatively in lesson presentations. Cooperative groups were developed among the students in mid-September. Base groups were developed by the teachers with consideration to observed compatibility and prior teachers' recommendations. Group bonding was established through various activities. Social skills were encouraged through bulletin boards, T-Charts, and teacher modeling. Throughout the intervention, cooperative lessons were built into the weekly curriculum. The complexity of the cooperative plans increased from the completion of a single page assignment to the point of involving a long term group science presentation.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The effects of the four-part intervention were assessed through several methods. Students were given opportunities to participate in several extra academic activities consisting of Brain Busters, Extra Credit work, and Challenges. Monthly records of student participation were maintained throughout the intervention. These data were collated (Appendis P). Figure 5 shows the percentage of opportunities taken advantage of out of the total number offered by the teacher per month.

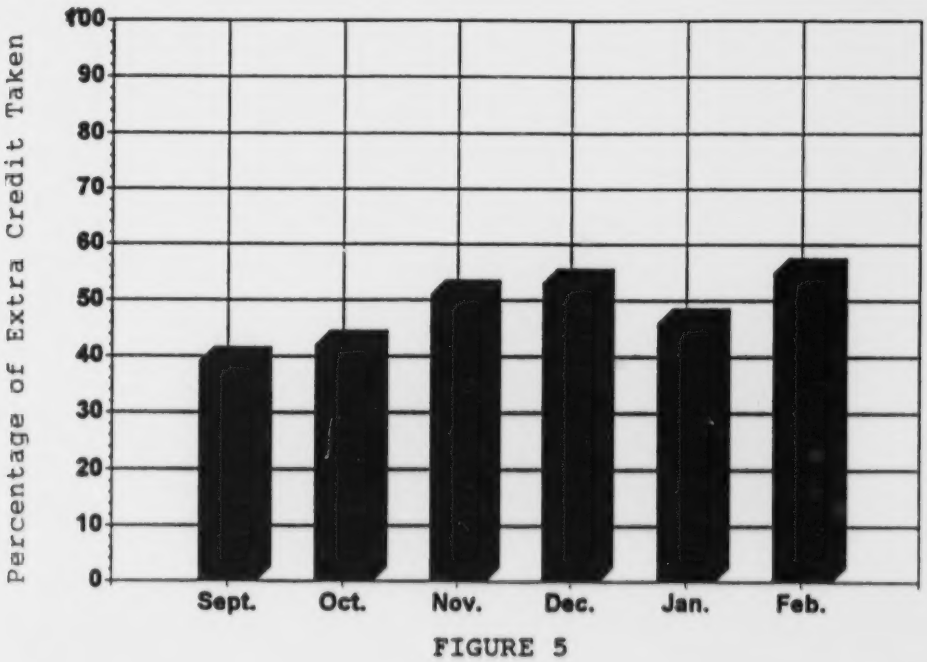

FIGURE 5

FIGURE 5

Participation in Extra Academic Activities
Sept. 1994 - Feb. 1995

During the four week observation period, prior to the onset of the intervention, students displayed a 39 percent

response rate to extra academic activities. Participation rose notably during the intervention to a maximum of 55 percent, only decreasing in January. Analysis of the data collected indicated an overall increase in the students' engagement in the learning process. Academic motivation appears to have been enhanced as a result of the intervention. Whole class participation occurred more frequently in the curriculum based extra credit offerings. Brain Buster participation never included the entire class, fluctuated with the type of question involved, and was related to individual interests.

The number of incomplete assignments and the number of students turning in late work was determined on a monthly basis (Appendix Q). These data are presented in Figures 6 and 7.

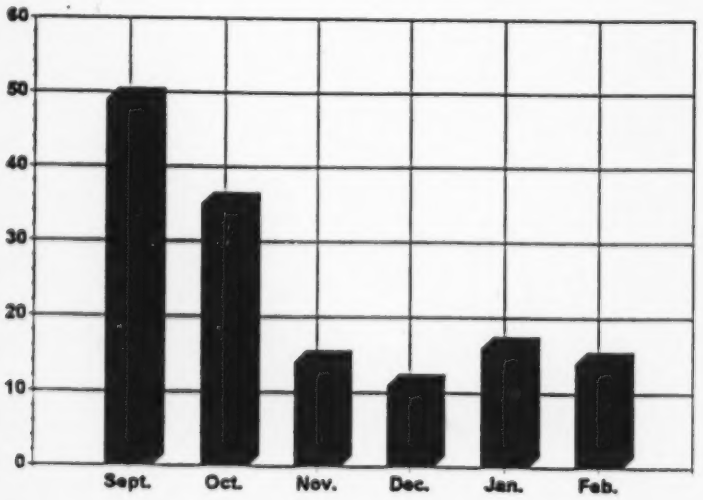

Figure 6

Number of Incomplete Assignments by Month
Sept. 1994 - Feb. 1995

Figure 6 indicates a sharp decline in the number of incomplete assignments in February in contrast to September. Further evaluation of the data determined that fewer students were responsible for the majority of the incomplete work as shown in Figure 7.

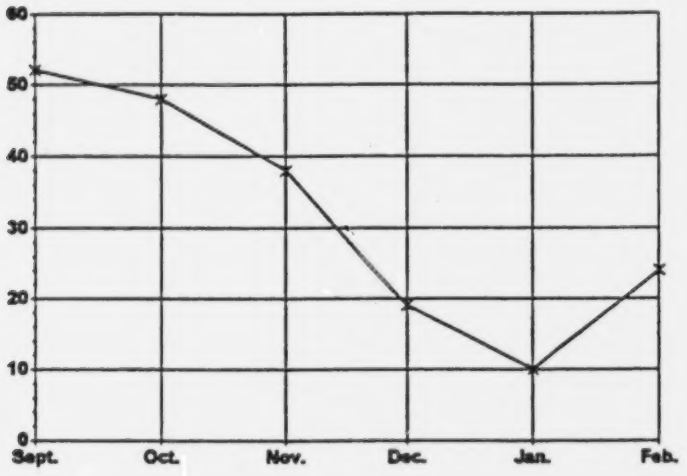

Figure 7

Percentage of Class turning in Late Assignments by Month
Sept. 1994 - Feb. 1995

During the four week observation period, 52 percent of the targeted students turned in late work. That number decreased notably. The data indicated that students had developed the organizational skills that could increase motivation and lead to academic success. The intervention appears to have had a positive effect not only on the number

of late assignments, but also on the percentage of the students generating that late work. Analysis of the data indicated that two students, approximately 10 percent of the class, persisted in this habit.

Anecdotal records revealed that the increase in the number of late assignments and students responsible for them in February was a result of one long term assignment which involved 24 percent of the class. Other assignments included in the data were of a short term nature.

Student goals were tabulated by the number of goals set and attained (Appendix R). These data were compared to the total possible goals for the class. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Number and Percentages of Goals Set and Attained
Sept. 1994 - Feb. 1995

Month	Goals Actually Set	Goals Actually Met	% Met
Sept.	6	6	100
Oct.	66	41	62
Nov.	57	41	72
Dec.	71	51	72
Jan.	75	46	61
Feb.	63	44	70

Goals set in September reflect individual initiative with no teacher prompting. The percentage of goals set increased and decreased over the course of the intervention. The significant increase was evidenced in the goals that were actually achieved. The intervention appears to have had a positive effect on the targeted students' abilities to self-assess and establish goals that they could accomplish.

Students were given a "Rating Scale for Learners" for self-evaluation both in November and February. The data from these surveys is presented for comparison in Table 2.

Table 2

Percentage of Students Indicating Improvement or Staying the Same in Feb. 1995 as compared to Nov. 1994

Behavior Rated	% Improved	% Stayed Same
Homework completed on time	39	33
Effort	22	61
Participation in class	28	39
Attention in class	61	17
Behavior	44	39
Time on task	28	50
Questioning	33	45

Students perceived the greatest improvement in the areas of paying attention in class, behavior in class, and turning in work on time. The researchers considered the improvement figures to be positive indicators of the students' ability to self-evaluate, recognize strengths, and identify areas requiring more development. (Appendix S)

The affects of the cooperative learning intervention were ascertained through teacher observation. As learning became less isolated, the targeted students demonstrated behaviors that indicated increased self-esteem. These behaviors included valuing the ideas of others, risk-taking, and self-confidence. The targeted students were able to successfully collaborate in the accomplishment of academic projects. Reflections indicated increased feelings of responsibility for the group product and the group's successes and deficiencies. Some reflections are found in Appendix T.

Additional data to support the effectiveness of the intervention was documented through positive parental responses (Appendix U). Response forms were returned by 95 percent of the parents both in November and in the spring. Of the returned forms, 100 percent of the comments were positive. Parents perceived the classroom atmosphere to be supportive and nurturing for their students' learning. Parents appreciated the opportunity for students to take a greater role in their own learning.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the data presented and analyzed, the four-part intervention had a positive effect on the academic motivation of the targeted students. The components of the intervention: portfolio assessment, assignment notebooks, goal-setting, and cooperative learning skills, were balanced and integrated to the extent that the intervention could easily be orchestrated by the classroom teachers without abandoning curriculum guidelines, or imposing additional time constraints.

The portfolio assessment component was considered by the researchers to be extremely valuable. Teacher observation indicated that students enjoyed the idea of having a collection of their works safely kept and appreciated by others. Students displayed enthusiasm as a result of being active participants during conferences. The targeted students were empowered with the responsibility for the explanation and direction of their own learning. The students were part of the decision-making process. This attitude contrasts with the feeling that is commonly offered during this vital time when decisions are being made and students are being assessed. Teachers observed that students responded positively to the undivided attention of the adults present while students shared efforts and successes, and discussed plans to deal with weaknesses.

Parent reaction to the portfolio assessment was equally positive. Supportive comments were written regarding the reflection sheets, the idea of taking responsibility for self, the opportunity to see the good with the bad, and the evidence of effort and improvement. Parents conveyed pride in their children and satisfaction with the program. "I'm proud of her," one parent wrote, "and that she truly enjoys learning, not just for the reward of good grades and the praise, but to know more and be able to use her knowledge to help others and for her own conversational skills." Parental responses are found in Appendix U.

Portfolio assessment appears to have provided the framework for parental involvement and encouragement that Berliner and Cassenova (1993) stressed as motivating factors necessary for responsible educational growth. Students became aware of the academic priorities that parents often reveal only to teachers.

The assignment notebook component served as an organizational tool to manage assignments. Its contribution to the academic success of the students was evidenced by the decrease in the number of late assignments, and in the number of students habitually responsible for the late work. The data suggest that long term assignments may not be effectively addressed by this tool.

The integration of the goal-setting component within the assignment notebook made it convenient to simultaneously manage both. Goal-setting was also an integral part of the portfolio development. Some students found it difficult to set realistic goals in the early stages of the intervention. As the students became more adept at self-assessing, goals became more appropriate and attainable. In the latter stages of the intervention, students added the process of planning steps necessary to meet their goals.

The positive impact of this component on student motivation was that students displayed more responsibility for learning. The decrease in late assignments and number of students generating them indicated an increase in the students' academic responsibility.

The impact of cooperative learning was the least obvious in the tabulated intervention results. However, cooperative learning was an underlying factor in the success of the other components. This component created a less isolated learning atmosphere and an opportunity to build on the strengths of all students. The targeted students developed better social interactions which increased self-esteem. Decreasing the competitive factor in the classroom enabled students to focus on self-improvement and academic growth. The researchers concluded that self-assessment skills had been enhanced through cooperative learning.

The researchers strongly recommend the implementation of all four components of the intervention. Implementing any of the components in isolation would not be as effective as the complete intervention. Modifications to specific grade levels may be necessary and are suggested.

The benefits provided by portfolio assessment merit this component a priority position at any grade level. The scope of the strategy will grow as the comfort level of both students and teachers increase.

Selections of artifacts should begin the first week of school to enable students to later identify progress or problems. These artifacts might include writing samples, placement tests, or interest surveys. Teachers should make certain that artifacts are labeled for assignment identification and dated for easier comparison. Reflection sheets should be altered to include this information.

Teachers implementing this strategy must address management concerns. The portfolios should be constructed prior to the beginning of the school year. Quantities of reflection sheets should be available in the students' portfolios, as well as another accessible place. Storage space for the portfolios must be convenient and practical. Portfolios should not be kept within the students' desks. Regular time must be allocated for selecting, maintaining, and updating the contents of the portfolio.

Portfolio conferences with students, teachers, and parents are essential. If parents are reluctant to participate, alternate arrangements must be made to provide those children the opportunity to share with a caring adult. Counselors, former teachers, child care providers, or teenage siblings may serve as substitutes in these cases. The researchers recommend opportunities for peer conferences to build confidence and serve as practice prior to the adult conferencing.

The assignment notebook would be recommended in a modified form. At the third grade level, this notebook was somewhat cumbersome because of size. The researchers would have preferred an instrument of a more appropriate size to be kept permanently on the desk top. The targeted students tended to become unaware of unfinished work without a visual reminder. Because this notebook was stored within the desk, frequent teacher reminders to update daily assignments were necessary. Students were often scrambling at the end of the day to record afternoon assignments.

Researchers do not recommend the use of this tool below the third grade level. A less complex organizational tool would be more practical at the lower grades. The management requirements of the tool could outweigh its value.

The goal-setting component also requires a gradual introduction. Brainstorming possibilities for goals may serve as a beginning. Many student-generated goals will not

be academic at first. Teachers should be accepting of all goal selections. Direction toward academic goals can be developed through modeling. Goal-setting is appropriate for all grade levels.

The development of cooperative learning strategies is an on-going process. The foundations can be established within the first weeks of school as the classroom climate is being developed. The weekly lessons provide for the acquisition of the social skills and group interactions necessary to the intervention. This component could function independently with much success. The strategy is recommended for incorporation with the other components to provide an opportunity for students to learn to work with others and value their own contributions. Cooperative learning could be successful at all grade levels.

The researchers considered the four-part intervention beneficial as an educational strategy. The intervention will be continued for the remainder of the 1994-1995 school year as a means of enhancing the students' motivation. The modifications suggested will be instituted, and the intervention will be continued in future years. The intervention gave the researchers an insight into the students' perceptions of themselves and will better guide the researchers in future decision-making and curriculum planning.

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Appendices

STUDENT INTEREST SURVEY
To be completed with parents.

CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE AND/OR FILL IN THE BLANK:

(1) When you have spare time, do you:

A. read?	NEVER	SOMETIMES	A LOT
B. write?	NEVER	SOMETIMES	A LOT
C. play Sega/Nintendo?	NEVER	SOMETIMES	A LOT
D. watch TV?	NEVER	SOMETIMES	A LOT
E. play outside?	NEVER	SOMETIMES	A LOT
F. work on hobbies?	NEVER	SOMETIMES	A LOT

(2) What is your favorite subject in school? (CHOOSE ONE)
SPELLING READING MATH SCIENCE SOCIAL STUDIES ENGLISH ART MUSIC P.E. HANDWRITING OTHER_____

(3) In which subject do you do best? (CHOOSE ONE)
SPELLING READING MATH SCIENCE SOCIAL STUDIES ENGLISH ART MUSIC P.E. HANDWRITING OTHER_____

(4) In which subject do you want to improve? (CHOOSE ONE)
SPELLING READING MATH SCIENCE SOCIAL STUDIES ENGLISH ART MUSIC P.E. HANDWRITING OTHER_____

(5) How do you feel about extra credit work?
STRONGLY LIKE LIKE DON'T LIKE NO OPINION

(6) List the chores and responsibilities you have at home.
DISHES GARBAGE FEEDING PETS CLEANING ROOM
MAKING BED COOKING BABYSITTING WATERING PLANTS
OTHER(S)_____

(7) Are you involved in organized activities after school? YES NO

(7 continued)

If answer is yes, list activities.

SCOUTING	FOOTBALL	SOCCER	BASEBALL/SOFTBALL
SWIMMING	WRESTLING	BASKETBALL	CHURCH

OTHER_____

(8) How much time do you spend on reading or schoolwork each night?

LESS THAN 1/2 HOUR
1/2 - 1 HOUR
MORE THAN 1 HOUR

PARENT SIGNATURE:_____

COMMENTS:_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return by Friday, September 2, 1994.

Interviewed teach

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Form

TEACHER INTERVIEW

(Previous Year Teachers)

1. What percentage of your class had difficulty completing school work last year?

2. What activities did students choose during free time last year?

3. How many students participated in/completed the Book-It program last year?

4. How many students participated in Invent America last year? Was it required?

5. Did you ever make Extra Credit work available to this class? If so, what was the level of participation?

6. What were your requirements for checking out books from the library? How many students exceeded this requirement?

7. What percentage of your students in last year's class do you consider motivated learners?

0-10% 11-20% 21-30% 31-40% 41-50%

51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81-90% 91-100%

8. Will you summarize the quality of motivation evidenced by last year's 52 ?

Interviewed teac

Appendix C

Completed Teacher Interview Forms

TEACHER INTERVIEW

(Previous Year Teachers)

1. What percentage of your class had difficulty completing school work last year? all did but Extended time = 25%

2. What activities did students choose during free time last year? (Draw & Color) What little time they had.

3. How many students participated in/completed the Book-It program last year? 7/5

4. How many students participated in Invent America last year? Was it required? 3 no

5. Did you ever make Extra Credit work available to this class? If so, what was the level of participation?

no

6. What were your requirements for checking out books from the library? How many students exceeded this requirement? 1 book a week - bring back before new one is checked out.

7. What percentage of your students in last year's class do you consider motivated learners?

0-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%
51-60%	61-70%	(71-80%)	81-90%	91-100%

8. Will you summarize the quality of motivation evidenced by last year's 53 ?

Pretty motivated, but slow.

slow processing

Interviewed teacher: _____

TEACHER INTERVIEW

(Previous Year Teachers)

1. What percentage of your class had difficulty completing school work last year? 20-25%

2. What activities did students choose during free time last year? There was no extra time. Father & do nothing rather than ed. game.

3. How many students participated in/completed the Book-It program last year? 8/5

4. How many students participated in Invent America last year? Was it required? 5

5. Did you ever make Extra Credit work available to this class? If so, what was the level of participation?

Yes, math more than reading
few part.

6. What were your requirements for checking out books from the library? How many students exceeded this requirement?

7. What percentage of your students in last year's class do you consider motivated learners?

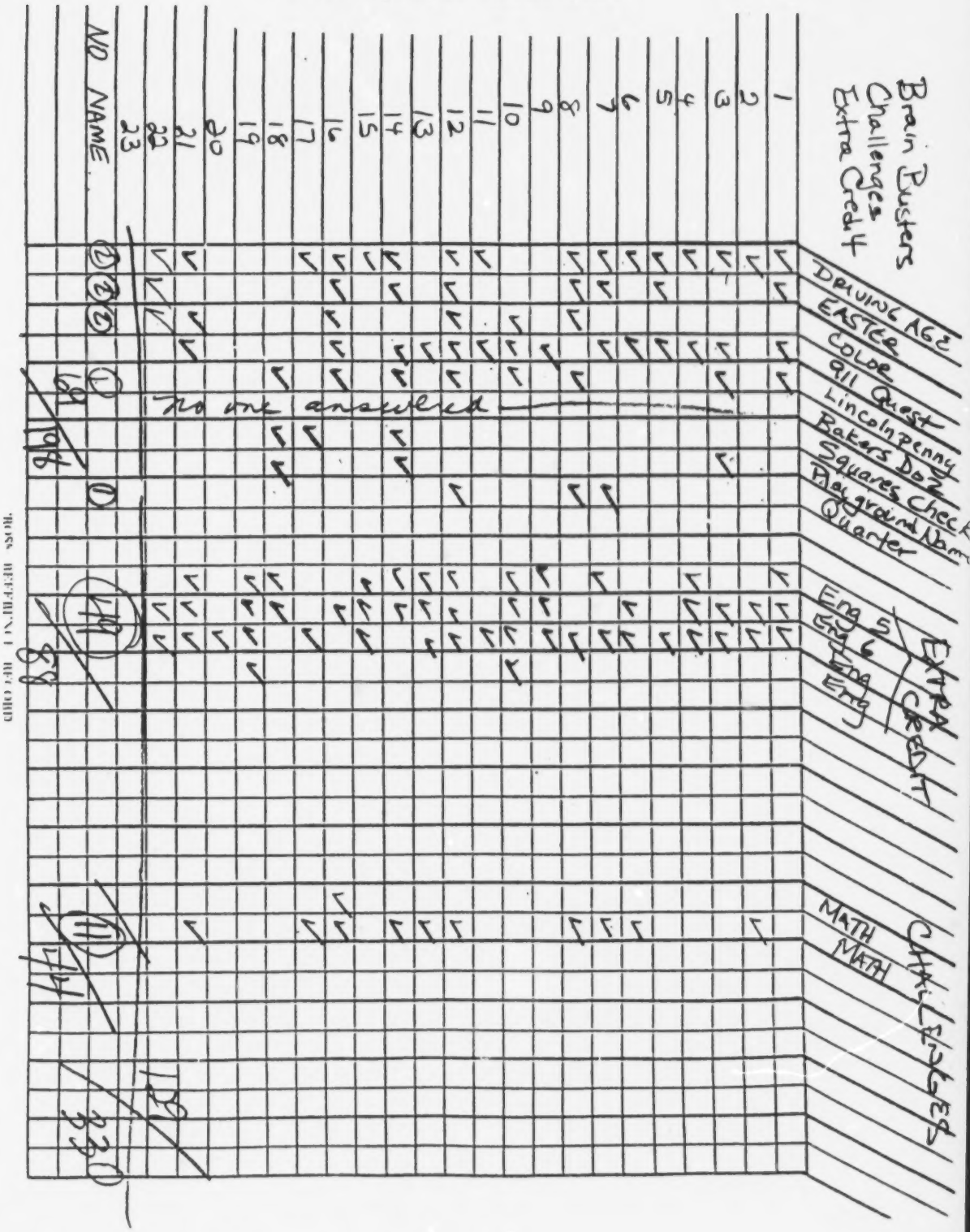
0-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	(41-50%)
51-60%	61-70%	71-80%	81-90%	91-100%

8. Will you summarize the quality of motivation evidenced by last year's 54 nts?

med - motivation, slow processing

Appendix D

Participation Check List



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Appendix E

Collated Student Survey Data

Student Name:_____

STUDENT INTEREST SURVEY
To be completed with parents.

CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE AND/OR FILL IN THE BLANK:

(1) When you have spare time, do you:

A. read?	NEVER //	SOMETIMES ~~THL~~ ~~THL~~ ////	A LOT
B. write?	NEVER //	SOMETIMES ~~THL~~ ~~THL~~ /	A LOT ///
C. play Sega/Nintendo?	NEVER ~~THL~~ /	SOMETIMES ~~THL~~ /	A LOT ////
D. watch TV?	NEVER	SOMETIMES ~~THL~~ //	A LOT ////~~THL~~
E. play outside?	NEVER	SOMETIMES ~~THL~~ /	A LOT ~~THL~~ ~~THL~~
F. work on hobbies?	NEVER ////	SOMETIMES ~~THL~~ ////	A LOT ///

Quantity #7 After school Act/student
1 //
2 //
3 ~~THL~~
4 /
5 //
6 /

(2) What is your favorite subject in school? (CHOOSE ONE)
SPELLING READING MATH SCIENCE SOCIAL STUDIES ENGLISH ART MUSIC P.E. 3 Not respond
HANDWRITING OTHER_____

(3) In which subject do you do best? (CHOOSE ONE)
SPELLING READING MATH SCIENCE SOCIAL STUDIES ENGLISH ART MUSIC P.E.
HANDWRITING OTHER_____

(4) In which subject do you want to improve? (CHOOSE ONE)
SPELLING READING MATH SCIENCE SOCIAL STUDIES ENGLISH ART MUSIC P.E.
HANDWRITING OTHER_____

(5) How do you feel about extra credit work?
STRONGLY LIKE LIKE DON'T LIKE NO OPINION

(6) List the chores and responsibilities you have at home.
DISHES GARBAGE FEEDING PETS CLEANING ROOM
MAKING BED COOKING BABYSITTING WATERING PLANTS
OTHER(S)_____

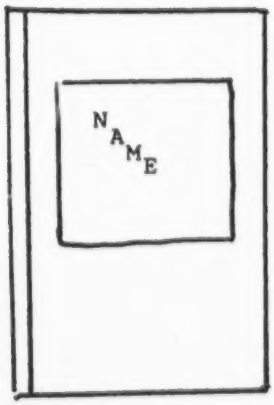
Question #6 Info

#8 TIME SPENT ON HOMEWORK
LESS THAN ½ hr ////
½ – 1 hr ~~THL~~ ////
1 hr +
no ans. ///

Quantity chores/student
2 /
3 ~~THL~~ /
4 ////
5 //
6 //
6+ /

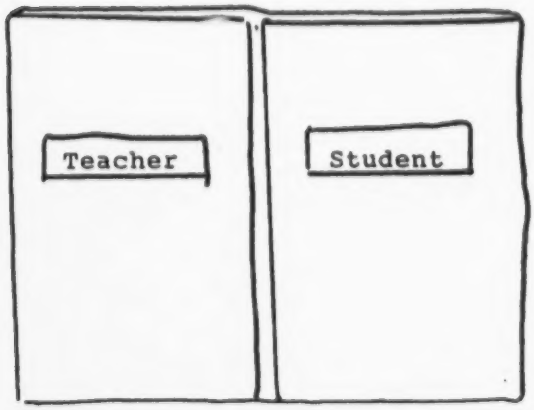
Appendix F

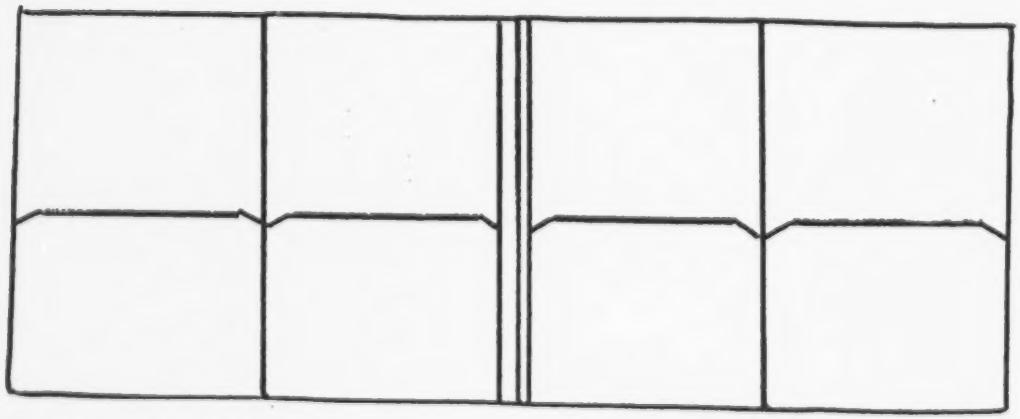
Portfolio Illustration



Closed portfolio

Name plate is personalized





Teacher selections Student selections

Fully opened portfolio

Appendix G

Portfolio Selection Form

I chose this _____ for my portfolio

because _____

_____

_____.

I chose this _____ for my portfolio

because _____

_____

_____.

I chose this _____ for my portfolio

because _____

_____

_____.

I chose this _____ for my portfolio

because _____

_____

_____ _____.

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Appendix H

Sample of Completed Student
Selection Forms

I chose this writing page for my portfolio
because I want you to
see how much I've
improved.

my cursive writing has continued to improve. We are still working on capital letters, but my small letters look pretty good!

My carsive writing has contued to improve. We are still working on capital letters, but my small letters look pretty good!

59

Dec-8-11

I chose this pen Pal Letter for my portfolio because I did good

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I've been going four years.

In Syria there aren't many places to go or things to do. On the seventh we got about ten inches of snow and it was 29 ~~Degrees~~ FARENHIGHT. We got a snowday. I didn't know so my friend stopped me. How are you? I'm fine. How many days do you have for Christmas break? We get about a week and a half (Yes!)

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I chose this English page for my portfolio
because I could have done better

5C

h it. (try) tried
ver the fence. (watch) watched
s. (score) scored
he correct form of the GRAMM USAGE

ard. (work) worked
. (help) helped
ctice) practiced
score) scored

5. The baseball game

B. Read each sentence. Write the verb. Then write whether the verb is in the **present tense**, the past tense, or the **future tense.** (pages 84–85)

6. Benny comes to the plate. Present
7. He scored three runs in the last game. Past
8. Today Benny strikes out. Present
9. Maybe he will hit better next time. Further

C. Write each sentence. Use the correct form of the verb in the present tense. (pages 86–87)

10. The ball ___ out to left field. (fly) T
11. The left fielder ___ the ball. (miss) Misses
12. Yvette ___ to second base. (race) Ra
13. The next two players ___ on base. (get) get

D. Write each sentence. Use a verb in the past tense in each blank. (pages 88–89)

14. Dino ___ the ball to center. (smash) smashes

F. Write each sentence. Use the correct form of the main verb. You do not write the past tense of these verbs by adding *-ed*. (pages 92–93)

22. The big game has ___. (begin) began
23. The coach has ___ the players some good tips. (give) gave
24. The players have ___ their warm-up exercises. (do) don
25. The coaches have ___ each other for two years. (know) kn

buzz **hiss** **giggle** **meow**

What do these verbs have in common? Each one makes the sound it describes. Using words that sound like their meaning is called **onomatopoela**. Make a list of other verbs like these. How many of the words on your list tell about animal sounds?

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Appendix I

Sample of Completed Teacher Selection Forms

I chose this Science Review for ~~my~~ portfolio

because it was done cooperatively within a group and the job was well done!

DW.

I chose this Soc. St. Skills Test for ~~my~~ portfolio

because it represents that the child did a nice job interpreting a picture and graph. Test was read to students.

Dec. 16, 1994

© Barrie Kingore 1993

I chose this written paragraph for portfolio

because it shows a beginning of the year ability of paragraph construction.

Appendix J

"Rating Scale for Learners"

RATING SCALE FOR LEARNERS

Name_____ Date_____ Team____

Rate how you are as a student.
Circle one number for items 1 to 7. Write answers for 8 to 11. Think about how you are for the whole day. Be honest!

	Could improve		Okay		Great
1. I get my homework done and turned in on time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I try hard in class.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I raise my hand and participate in class.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I pay attention in class.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My behavior in class (is) _____	1	2	3	4	5
6. I use time wisely in class.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I ask questions when I don't understand something.	1	2	3	4	5

8. My best class is _____ because_____
_____
_____

9. My worst/hardest class is _____ because_____
_____
_____

10. My plan to be an even better student is to _____
_____
_____

11. One thing I want my teachers/parent to know is_____
_____
_____

63

My score:_____

Appendix K
Portfolio Invitation to
Nov. Conferences

November 7, 1994

Dear Parents,

Students in our third grade class have been collecting samples of work and developing portfolios to show their growth from the beginning of the current year. I have extended an invitation to your child to accompany you to your conference this week to discuss this portfolio with you. It is advantageous for your child to assume the responsibility for academic growth and to have the opportunity to share successes with you.

If you prefer to have a conference without your child present, I will send the portfolio home with your child next week and ask you to respond to your child regarding its contents. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 239-2550.

Sincerely,

Miss Dana Wesner

Response to At-Home Look at Portfolio

This form can become part of your records after the parent has reviewed the portfolio at home. It will provide a good indication of how well you have been communicating about portfolio assessment.

Parent Response Form

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

Please answer the following questions:

Did your child review the portfolio with you? _____

What part of the portfolio did you like best? _____

_____

Did your child's progress come as a surprise to you? Why?

_____

_____

Do you have questions about anything in the portfolio?

_____

_____

_____

I have reviewed the portfolio and am returning it with this form.

_____

Parent

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Appendix M

Portfolio Cover Letter for Spring
Home Conferences

We will celebrate as a class when all portfolios have been shared.

March 1995

Dear Parent or Family Member,

This portfolio is coming home to be shared with you. Its owner is very proud of the accomplishments contained within its pockets. Your child has already shared with Mrs. Anders or Miss Wiemer and is now anxious to share with you.

Some of the work you may have already seen, but new work and a new self-evaluation sheet has been included. Notice the samples of "Power Writing" and ask your child what it is all about. (We worked on this kind of writing to better prepare us for the IGAP writing test.) Let your child tell you about the goal-setting that has been taking place in the assignment notebook. Allow your child to share the strengths that cause pride. Also share the areas that need improvement and work together to help accomplish a way to do better.

Most students had the opportunity to complete a book they authored themselves. These books are on display and available for viewing at the Pecatonica Public Library. GOOD JOB!

Please share this portfolio over the next week and return by Wednesday with everything intact. The entire portfolio, including this letter will be coming home permanently in May. Your child has really grown. Please share and write some positive comments with your child about the work here.

Miss Wiemer and Mrs. Anders

_____

Parent/Family Member

Sample Assignment Notebook Pages

Name: _____

My goal/s for this week is ticket or All assignments done

Mon. 23

Reading: 242-243
Spelling: test
Handwriting: MRS. A
English: 140 - 151
Math:

Science:
S. Studies:
Other/Phonics: D.O.L.S DOG
Parent/Teacher Comment
Parent Signature:

Tues. 24

Reading: test ✓
Spelling: unit 19 Homework
Handwriting: MRS. A ✓
English: 152 - 153 ✓
Math:

Science: wheel & AXLE ✓
S. Studies: story ✓
Other/Phonics: 85 - 86 ✓
Parent/Teacher Comment
Parent Signature:

Wed. 25

Reading:
Spelling: 0
Handwriting:
English:
Math:

Science:
S. Studies:
Other/Phonics:
Parent/Teacher Comment
Parent Signature:

1-0 Nice knowing you. Hope to see you in Kindergarten!

67

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Name:

Thurs. 26

Reading: Ø

Spelling:

Handwriting: 64–65

English: study

Math:

Science: Pully

S. Studies: WEEKLY READ

Other/Phonics: Ø

Parent/Teacher Comment

Parent Signature:

Fri. 27

Reading: story

Spelling: test

Handwriting: writing pages

English: test 1 got A A

Math: pages 100-101

Science: Inc

S. Studies: Ø

Other/Phonics: Ø + reses

Parent/Teacher Comment

Parent Signature:

Things to remember:

Goal/s accomplished: I got all my asiments done

Rewritten goals:

Parent Signature:

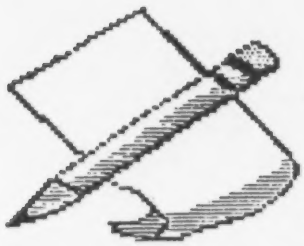
1995 JANUARY 1995

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Appendix O

Assignment Notebook Cover Letter

September 1994



Dear Parents,

We will be using an assignment notebook as a means to keep better track of current and up-coming assignments. Each child will be provided with one of their own. The students will be required to fill in their assignments daily in the blanks provided. They will also be encouraged to set up goals for themselves. We will work on this concept in class. The children will be able to take the assignment notebook home to share with their parents and make them more aware of what their child is doing in school. There will be a place for parent or teacher to comment as needed.

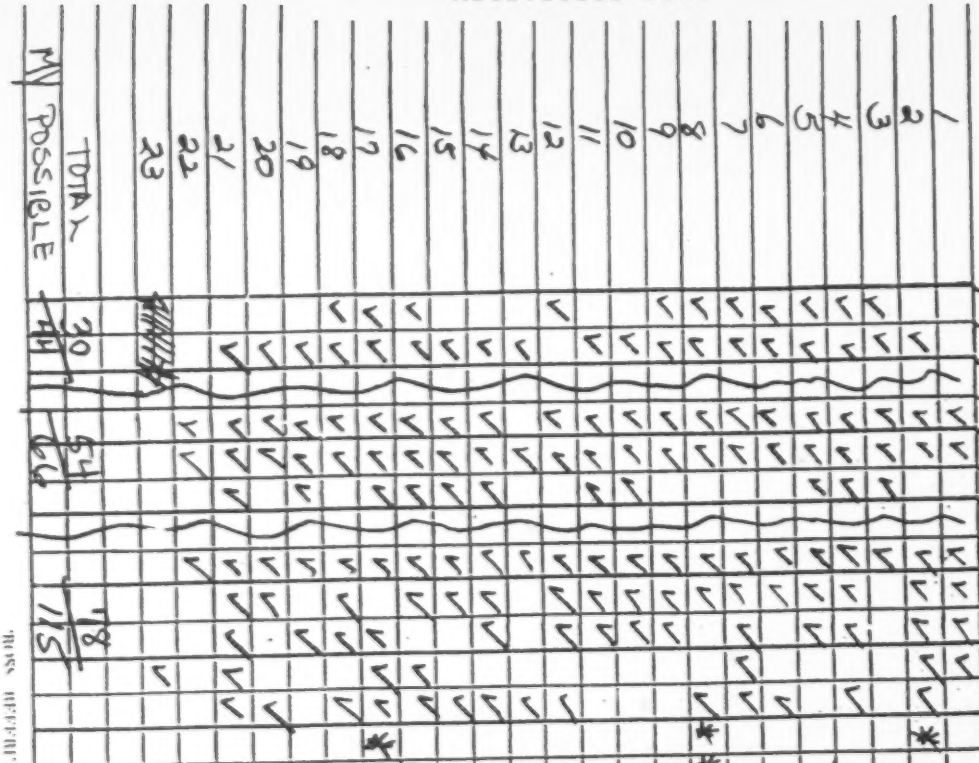
I hope this will make the students more conscious of assignments that have been completed and those that need to be completed. It will also provide at a glance some of the extended assignments we may do this year. The idea of goal-setting will hopefully continue to be part of the learning processes they use to help increase their understanding.

Thank You,

Miss Diana Wiemer

Appendix P

Collated Extra Academic
Activities Data



70

RECORD

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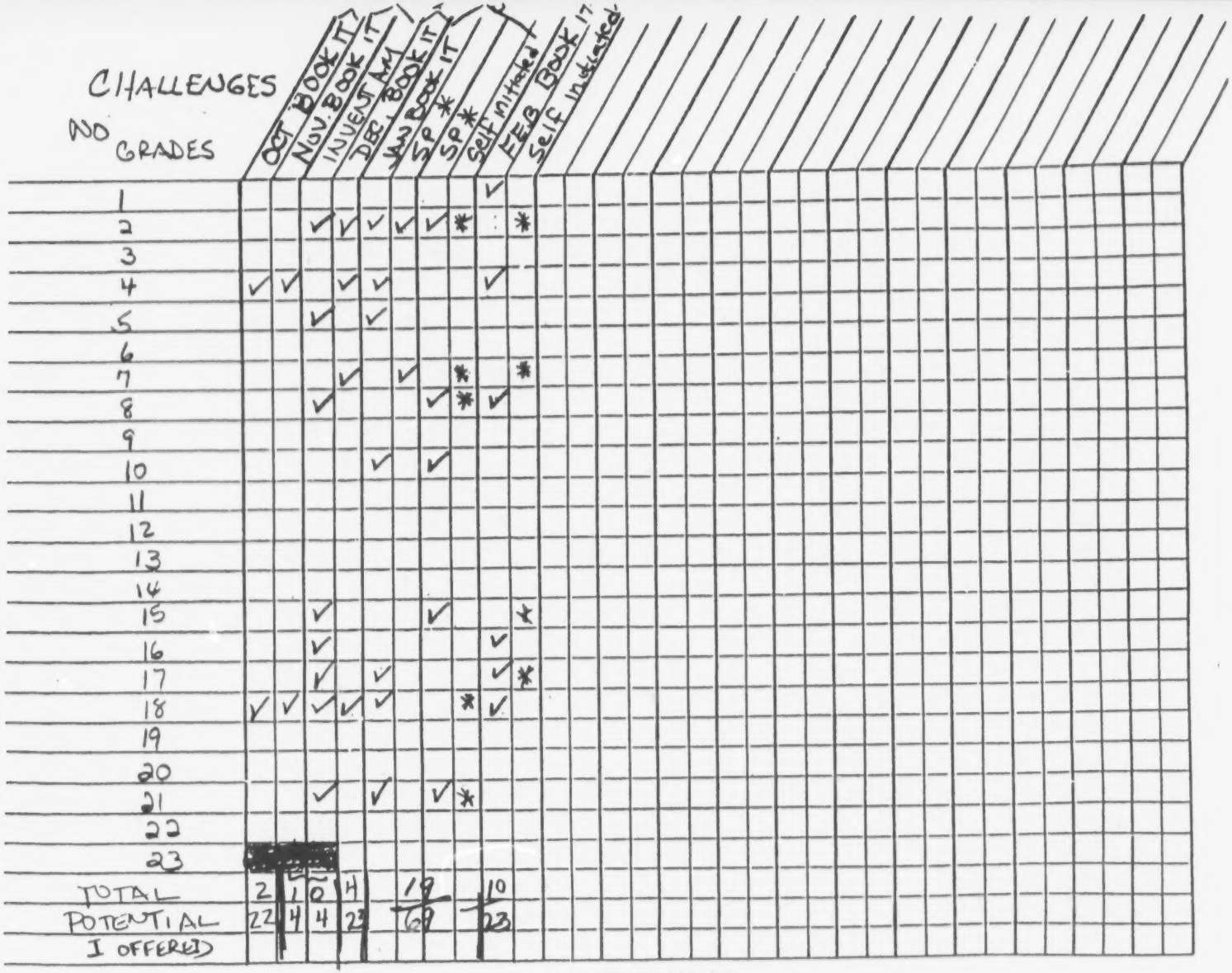
NO GRADES

BRAIN BUSTER QUESTIONS

Oct. Nov.

	BONES	HALLOWEEN	YOLK	PRESIDENT	CALF	NIC/QUAR	JFK	DICTIONARY	SANTA	1st
1	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
2			✓							
3	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓
4					✓					
5		✓				✓	✓			✓
6					✓			✓	✓	
7	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
8					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9										✓
10	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
11										✓
12	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	
13		✓	✓			✓				✓
14					✓	✓			✓	✓
15										
16			✓		✓	✓				✓
17	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
18				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
19	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓
20					✓					✓
21	✓		✓				✓			✓
22										
23									✓	✓
NO NAMES		①	②			①		③	②	②
TOTAL		3	3			3	6			5
POTENTIAL		8	8			8	8			11

BARES
Birth Pl. Jesus
Who stole X-MA
Linking V
Super Bowl
Ice Plane
Mem Day
World Concert
Obi Pronoun
B+F Move
Too Mud Rain
9x9
5x7
Alphabet
3
1
1
1
4/1
11/6
2
3
1
6
2
138

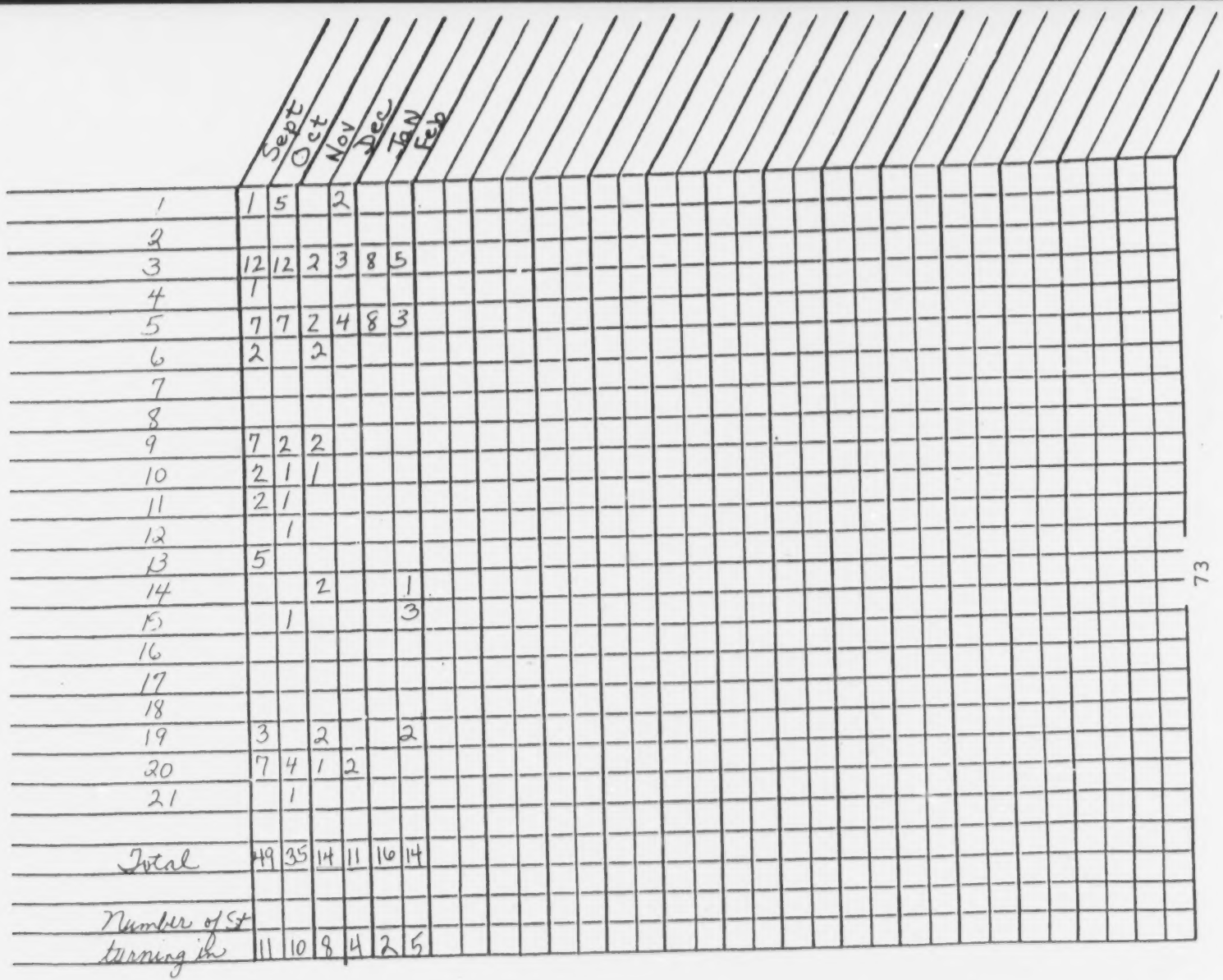


72

"ROSS JEFFERSON RECORD

Appendix Q

Incomplete Work Data

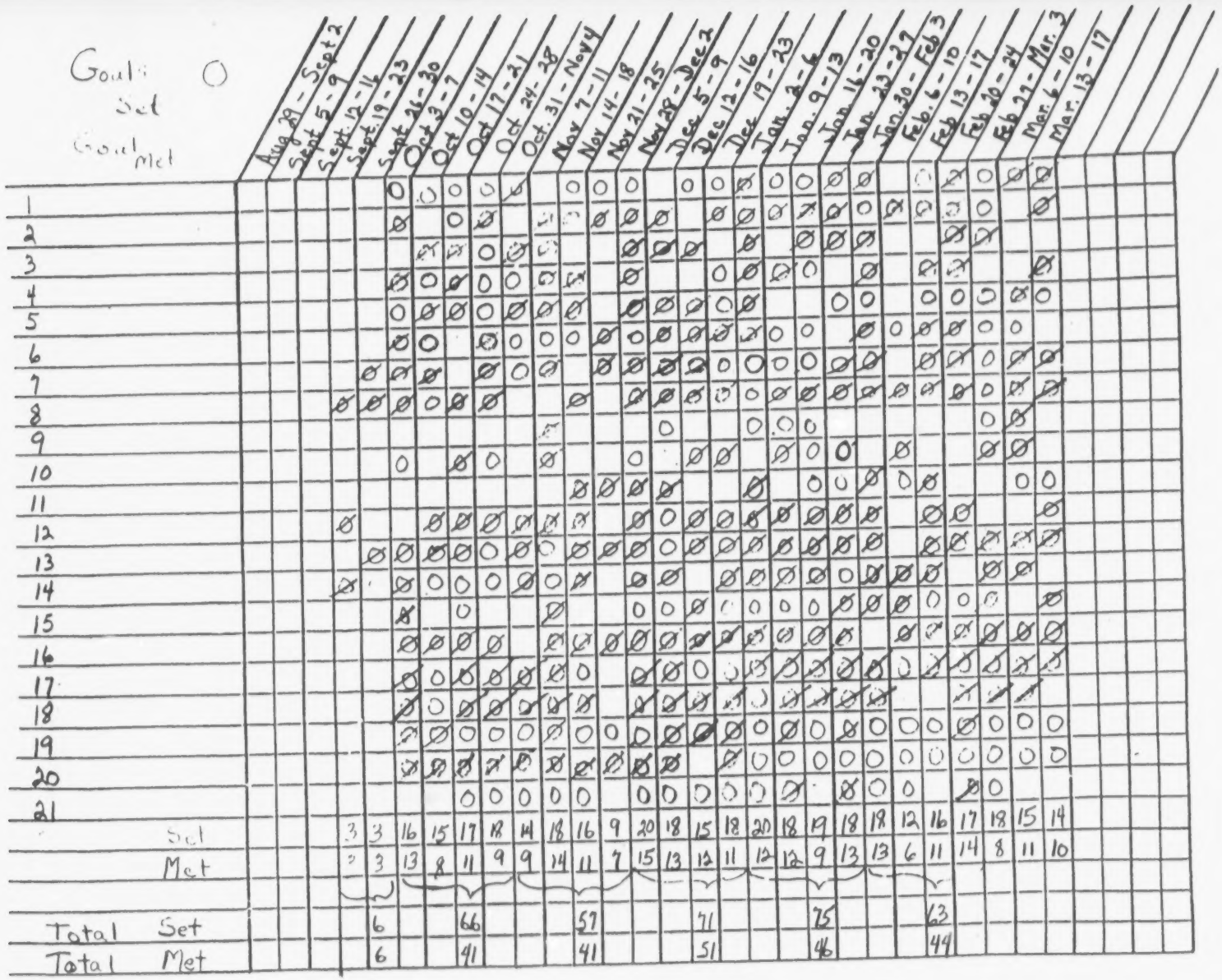


	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
1	1	5		2		
2						
3	12	12	2	3	8	5
4	1					
5	7	7	2	4	8	3
6	2		2			
7						
8						
9	7	2	2			
10	2	1	1			
11	2	1				
12		1				
13	5					
14			2			1
15		1				3
16						
17						
18						
19	3		2			2
20	7	4	1	2		
21		1				
Total	49	35	14	11	16	14
Number of St turning in	11	10	8	4	2	5

73

Appendix R

Goal Setting Tabulation



Appendix S

"Rating Scale for Learners"
Tabulated Data

RATING SCALE FOR LEARNERS

Name_____ Date_____ Team____

Rate how you are as a student.
Circle one number for items 1 to 7. Write answers for 8 to 11. Think about how you are for the whole day. Be honest!

	Improvement	Same
1. I get my homework done and turned in on time.	7	6
2. I try hard in class.	4	11
3. I raise my hand and participate in class.	6	7
4. I pay attention in class.	11	3
5. My behavior in class (is) _____	9	7
6. I use time wisely in class.	5	9
7. I ask questions when I don't understand something.	6	8

8. My best class is _____ because_____
_____
_____

9. My worst/hardest class is _____ because_____
_____
_____

10. My plan to be an even better student is to _____
_____
_____

11. One thing I want my teachers/parent to know is_____
_____
_____

75

My score:_____

Appendix T

Reflections on Group Project

I was excited about the presentations. The rocks presentation ruled. The sand presentation rocked. The volcano presentation was wild. The earths layers presentation was awesome. (we did it.) The water presentation was cool. The salt presentation was bodatious. They were all neat!

Putting on a Presentation may not be so easy. I did one. It's hard to get the Presentation ready. Another problem is having mixed up words, If you get mixed up words you get embarrassed. I got mixed up words and got embarrassed, SO will you!

The presentation was so hard to do. Our group presentation was second to last. Frist we had to look the Topic up. Then we decided who would do what. Next we got our supplies. Last we did the presentation. We did good.

Putting on a science progam was good for me for a few reasons. One is it was a good experience for me. Now I know how to put on a progam. Another is that the experiments were fun. They were fun because I worked in a group. Last, but not least, it was good for my brain. I learned alot.

That's what's fun about science.

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Parent Response Form

Date: 11-9-94

Name of Student: _____

Please answer the following questions:

Did your child review the portfolio with you? yes

What part of the portfolio did you like best? I liked his paper showing lower grades as well as good grades.

Did your child's progress come as a surprise to you? Why?

No, we try to keep track of his progress in school and go over the papers he brings home.

Do you have questions about anything in the portfolio?

No, I am proud of his work.

I have reviewed the portfolio and am returning it with this form.

_____
Parent

Parent Response Form

Date: 11/9/94

Name of Student: _____

Please answer the following questions:

Did your child review the portfolio with you? yes

What part of the portfolio did you like best? The fact that child and parent review it together with teacher. Gets the child involved and responsible for work done

Did your child's progress come as a surprise to you? Why?

I am very impressed and proud. She is a concerned considerate helpful daughter at home too. Glad to see the same @ school.

Do you have questions about anything in the portfolio?

No - very nice

I have reviewed the portfolio and am returning it with this form.

_____

Parent

We will celebrate as a class when all portfolios have been shared.

March 1995

Dear Parent or Family Member,

This portfolio is coming home to be shared with you. Its owner is very proud of the accomplishments contained within its pockets. Your child has already shared with Mrs. Anders or Miss Wiemer and is now anxious to share with you.

Some of the work you may have already seen, but new work and a new self-evaluation sheet has been included. Notice the samples of "Power Writing" and ask your child what it is all about. (We worked on this kind of writing to better prepare us for the IGAP writing test.) Let your child tell you about the goal-setting that has been taking place in the assignment notebook. Allow your child to share the strengths that cause pride. Also share the areas that need improvement and work together to help accomplish a way to do better.

Most students had the opportunity to complete a book they authored themselves. These books are on display and available for viewing at the Pecatonica Public Library. GOOD JOB!

Please share this portfolio over the next week and return by Wednesday with everything intact. The entire portfolio, including this letter will be coming home permanently in May. Your child has really grown. Please share and write some positive comments with your child about the work here.

Miss Wiemer and Mrs. Anders

We were very pleased with Power writing and her report card this quarter!

Parent/Family Member

Miss Wiemer and Class –

I am very impressed with what 3rd graders are learning these days!

- Machines, graphing, poetry writing, excellent math building skills, self-rating, keeping papers to compare + evaluate their own progress through the year –

All I clearly remember from 3rd grade was the chapter on telephone etiquette and being the quickest in understanding fractions and the slowest in learning multiplication tables!

Jonah role models his sisters and their academic work ethics. I am proud of him and his care for his good grades and that he truly enjoys learning not just for the reward of good grades and the praise but to know more and be able to use his knowledge to help others and for his own conversational skills! I hope everyone knows why they need to learn. Actually, we never stop learning!

Thank you, to you Miss Wiemer, for encouraging him and letting learning be exciting and fun! Over the years I've seen the energy get lost and you seem to have a well of it! Please keep energized!!

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